



SENATOR RUNNER'S WEEK IN REVIEW

A WEEKLY REVIEW THAT WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED AND UP-TO-DATE



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California's Infrastructure

The Governor in his State of the State Address yesterday laid a general plan for investing in California's crumbling infrastructure. This week's update will generally speak on California's infrastructure and next week, we will detail the Governor's plan.

News of the Week

[Governor Says, "Build It" in State of the State](#)

[Details of Public Work Plan](#)

[Traffic in Southern California Gets](#)

[an "F" on Annual Report Card](#)

[Antelope Valley Residents Respond to the State of the State](#)

[Victor Valley Response to Governor's Plan](#)

Needs Assessment

Although there is some debate over the specific programs and the priorities for funding infrastructure, there is little doubt that there are several hundred billion dollars in infrastructure needs that have been overlooked over the past two decades of record population growth. Regardless of the size of the bond, there will be a significant funding gap between the amount appropriated and the amount needed.

Levees and flood control: Early estimates from the Department of Water Resources indicate a minimum funding need of \$2 billion in one-time expenditures and approximately \$100 million annually for on-going maintenance.

Water infrastructure: Preliminary estimates indicate a need for upwards of \$15 billion over the next 20 years for water storage, conveyance, conservation, and the associated environmental mitigation requirements.

Roads and highways: The California Transportation Commission estimates a total unmet funding need of approximately \$125 billion, as of the end of 2004. Of this amount, the total unmet funding need for highways alone is approximately \$54 billion, or \$5.4 billion annualized over a 10-year period.

Ports: The Governor's Goods Movement Action Plan estimates a funding need of approximately \$47 billion for infrastructure and between \$2 billion and \$5 billion for air emission projects.

Priorities

With the overwhelming need for infrastructure investment, it is critical to establish realistic priorities that put public safety and economic growth at the top of the list. Top funding priority must go to flood control programs, revitalization of the state highway system, goods movement programs, expansion of California's water storage system, and other infrastructure programs.

Only after California's critical infrastructure needs are met, safety from floods are ensured, roads and highways are expanded to meet the needs of a growing population, and the efficient movement of goods into and through the ports is guaranteed, should California consider funding

other programs through interest bearing bonds.

Needed Reforms

Although California is in the midst of an infrastructure crisis, our economy is not sufficiently strong enough to support spending on programs that are not vital to the state. If we are going to ask the voters for tens of billions, we need to ensure that every dollar is used for actual infrastructure and not for mitigation programs.

We need to reform the bureaucratic delays and dollars wasted in order to use any infrastructure investment to its fullest potential. Right now, the Legislature often waives these bureaucratic processes for certain region's emergency projects or pet projects, and these projects are built just as safely but more cheaper and quicker.

For example, all projects deemed vital to the state's economic future also should be given exemptions from the CEQA permitting process. The Legislature approved giving a CEQA exemption to SBC Park for the San Francisco Giants, so why not for programs that are vital to public safety and the future growth of our economy?

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